



Transition Unit Producing a school magazine (Mini company)

Area of Study

Creativity and Enterprise

Overview

This unit affords students the opportunity to produce and sell a school magazine by setting up a mini-company. In their English classes the students discuss their vision for the school magazine and agree what topics would be most appealing to teenagers. They learn how to research topics and the craft of writing using a variety of styles. They enjoy taking on different roles within the overall Editorial team. With their Business Studies teacher they develop a business plan and set about organising all the steps involved in getting their magazine printed, promoted and sold (hopefully with a profit!).

Students enjoy the challenge and the personal achievement of creating and marketing their own magazine. This Unit offers a great diversity of experiences for the students and develops some life-long skills such as planning skills, team-work skills, how to work to deadlines, creative thinking, and much more.

Related learning

This unit builds on knowledge of a variety of writing styles developed at Junior Cert English and develops them to the more advanced level expected at Leaving Cert. It gives students practise in all five of the writing styles examined in the Leaving Cert. English exam. As such it is an invaluable basis for Leaving Cert composition writing as well as Q.B options on Leaving Cert Paper 1 and essay structuring on Paper 2.

Links with Business in terms of Enterprise, Marketing and P.R.

Links with Art for design, layout and use of graphics.

An additional option is to link into the challenge of presenting their school magazine in The Irish Times Schools Magazine Competition.

Outline of the unit

This unit runs for one term (September – Christmas) approx 14 weeks. The English and Enterprise class will both be timetable separately for 2 x forty minute classes per week.

For the first double class both teachers might take the class together to introduce the transition unit and explain how the different parts will fit together. This would also be a good time to discuss the students' hopes and expectations and to brainstorm initial

ideas. Previous school magazines might be shown to the students to inspire their ideas.

The activities undertaken in the English and Enterprise classes are outlined below separately.

ENGLISH

- Students are given the opportunity to browse through a wide range of magazines in order to heighten their awareness of target audience.
- Students identify and discuss features of magazines that they as teenagers find most appealing to establish ideas on content for their school magazine.
- Students discuss their vision for the magazine they will produce and decide on a title in keeping with their vision.
- Students learn about the roles involved in magazine production – Editor, Deputy Editor, Feature Articles Editor, Review Editor, Photo Editor.
- Students are taught Formal Letter of Application structure and submit letters for the role they aspire to in the magazine.
- Students are allocated roles based on letters of application (interviews to assess suitability for roles may also be conducted, time permitting)
- Students inform whole student body that they are producing a school magazine and invite submissions in a number of categories. A competition may be run to guarantee a high volume of submissions.
- Students learn the criteria for Feature Article, Report, Review and Short Story writing and produce at least one edited piece in each of these genres.
- Students are taught research methods to employ in writing a Feature Article.
- Students learn about conducting interviews and practise assignments in interviewing
- A local journalist is invited to talk to the class about the process of writing an article
- Students read peer articles and discuss what should go into the magazine.
- Students work as a team laying out selected Feature Articles, Reports, Reviews, Short Stories, placing ads, photos, art work, etc.
- Students agree magazine fillers – horoscopes, advice pages, upcoming events, concerts, jokes, eccentric information, etc.
- Editor will organise articles to be sent to printers and ensure all 'staff' have met their deadlines.

ENTERPRISE

- To engage students in the idea of producing a magazine a guest speaker from the local Enterprise Board will come in and give a talk on what commitment is required to make the mini-company a success.

- Then students prepare to conduct market research. Firstly, they must brainstorm as a class the kind of information that they need to find out: who is our market, what would the market like to see in the magazine, what price will they pay, where will they buy it and why.
- The students as a class must agree on the focus of their market research i.e. what questions they want answered.
- Decide on a method for collecting information- in this case a questionnaire. (See appendix for sample)
- Students are divided up into groups and decide on what sample of the market they are going to give the questionnaires to e.g. Group 1- First years, Group 2 – Second years and so on. The amount of students they interview will depend on how many students there are in the school. For example, if there are 90 first years (30 in each class) they should select a sample of 15 from each class to get an over all view of first year opinions. Time would not allow all first years to be sampled.
- A separate group will be asked to hand out the questionnaires to the staff of the school.
- Another group of students will be set up to analyse questionnaire results to give an overall visual presentation to show how the market responded to the idea of producing a school magazine. This can be done with the help of the ICT teacher and then the findings are reported back to group.
- A costing committee will be set up to source out printing costs (paper, paper size, number of pages, black ink, colour ink) cost of use of school equipment, etc. They will do this by phoning up or calling into local printing companies and sourcing the best quality magazine for the best price.
- The costing committee would also take into account expenses incurred in organising the magazine launch. See final bullet point.
- Students will seek out ads from local businesses to raise capital for the school magazine. This will involve students drafting a letter to local businesses, calling in, taking account of who has paid and who has not. The size and price of each ad must be decided on by the advertising manager before this can be done.
- Students will ensure they have the correct marketing mix in place to sell the magazine.
- Students will promote the magazine through advertising. This will involve a poster campaign, intercom announcements, and visiting classrooms.
- In order to maximise sales, the sales team will take deposits on specified days from interested customers.

- The Sales and Promotion team would be in charge of the Magazine launch. This would involve them having a list of who has paid a deposit and who has not. They would also have stewards in place for Health and Safety reasons (members of mini-company), set up hall with a magazine stand, banners, balloons, refreshments. Letters would also be written to Principal, Staff, Parents, etc to inform them of this important date.

Breakdown of the unit (how timetabled)

Class contact

Two English classes per week x 14 weeks.

Two Enterprise classes per week x 14 weeks.

Independent group work activities such as market research, eliciting advertising, conducting interviews, eliciting articles from other students, organising launch of the magazine = approx 9 hrs

Aims

This transition unit aims to:

- enable students to work together successfully towards the production of a school magazine
- develop skills of co-operation, communication and creativity.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

Enterprise classes

- conduct market research and evaluate findings
- present results in bar chart format using Excel
- identify and discuss all the steps involved in developing and selling a magazine
- reflect upon and critically analyse their performance in the running of a mini-company.
- describe all the different elements required in order to produce and sell a school magazine

Woodwork Classes

- identify different magazine genres and their target audiences
- analyse and critique a variety of writing styles – Feature Article, Report, Review, Short Story
- compose and edit their own Feature Article, Report, Review, Short Story for target audience of teenagers
- recognise the role of good captions, headlines, images, etc.

- motivate other students to get written submissions in all genres from other year groups, Junior and Senior, for their magazine
- critically analyse and evaluate their own work and that of their school community, to select the best content for their magazine.
- conduct independent research using library, internet, and personal interviews.

In both classes students should be able to

- work co-operatively and effectively as part of a team
- listen to each other and be able to negotiate differences that may arise
- show a capacity to plan and work to agreed deadlines toward a common goal
- demonstrate creativity and imagination in their design of the magazine and in their PR efforts (posters etc.).

Key skills

How evidenced

information processing

Viewing and analysing a wide range of magazines, identifying their target audience and exploring the relationship between content and target audience.
 Accessing and selecting information from a variety of sources (Internet, interview, library) for use in Feature Article, Report, and Review Writing.
 Navigate the internet to view specialist sites related to magazine production and running of a business.
 Analyse data gathered through market research and present it using ICT (e.g. Powerpoint or Excel).

critical and creative thinking

Brainstorming creative and interesting topics on which to write articles.
 Evaluating writing across a variety of genres to distinguish between good and poor quality writing.
 Composing, editing and assessing their own writing work and the work of others
 Evaluating the factors that could lead to the success of failure of the business.
 Thinking up imaginative ways of promoting and selling the magazine.

communicating	<p>Class discussions on magazines on the market and features appealing to teens</p> <p>Oral presentations to Year Group Assemblies relating to production of school magazine and calling for written submissions</p> <p>Producing visual P.R. posters</p> <p>Conducting regular meetings to assess progress and ensure deadlines are met</p> <p>Giving feedback on submissions for the magazine from own class and other classes</p> <p>Writing articles using a variety of styles and formats taking account of the audience and purpose.</p> <p>Listen to and respect opinions of fellow students in the business.</p>
working with others	<p>Participate in planning meetings chaired by Editor and Deputy Editor</p> <p>Taking on responsibilities of designated roles – Editor, Deputy Editor, etc</p> <p>Learning the dynamics of group work and how to work with others towards a common goal</p> <p>Being able to listen to other points of view and reaching a consensus so that the work can move on</p> <p>Reflecting on one's contribution to the group.</p>
being personally effective	<p>Planning all stages of production of magazine</p> <p>Monitoring progress along the way</p> <p>Taking responsibility for certain tasks and showing reliability in getting the task done to an agreed deadline</p> <p>Ensuring that the magazine is completed for date agreed with printers</p> <p>Motivating any group members who are falling behind.</p> <p>Receiving and responding to feedback from Editors.</p> <p>Reflecting on and evaluating own and group performance</p>

Learning approaches

- Class discussions
- Presentations
- Pair work
- Group work
- Individual work
- Independent learning/research
- Guest speakers
- Use of I.C.T.

Assessment approaches

Self, peer and teacher assessment of written work.

Students might select their best work for a Portfolio showing examples of written work, interviews, business plan, etc (to be assessed by both teachers).

Evaluation methods

On completion students will be asked to evaluate the overall Transition Unit and suggest modifications and improvements for future teaching.

Resources

English class:

Writing Workshop Second Edition – A Student's Guide to the Craft of Writing by Richard Mc Roberts

Language, Literature, Style – Padraic Nolan, John Sheil

Studies in Language – John Jennings

Words, Comprehension and Composition – Dorthea Finan

101 Ways to Improve your Word Power – Hugh Enfield

Language in Focus – John Sheil

The good web guide edited by Michelle Clare © 2001, The Good Web Guide Ltd

Find it on the Internet – Kye Valongo

Magazines

Newspapers

Worksheets prepared by teacher

Enterprise class

Junior Certificate Business book

Leaving Certificate Business book

County Enterprise Board

Microsoft Publisher

It's the Business for Transition Year- Darina Regan and Hilda O' Malley

The Transition Year 'Get up and Go' programme

Some useful websites

www.skool.ie

www.scoilnet.ie for quick access to newspaper front pages

www.unison.ie for national newspapers front pages

www.writingservices.eu/Magazines-Business-Writing-Services.htm

http://ty.slss.ie/mini_minT.html mini company get up and go programme can be downloaded here

<http://enterpriseencounter.slss.ie>

<http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/ho.html> For examples of rubrics or google rubrics.

The use of the inverted pyramid in Journalism related sites

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/journalism/writing/6042.html>

Visual aid for inverted pyramid

<http://www.gearupchicago.org/Tutorials/WritingForWeb/Important.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/News_writing

SCHOOL MAGAZINE QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a Transition Year student in _____ . We are publishing a school-magazine as our mini company. We would like you to please answer the following questions. This survey will be kept completely confidential and we hope that you will fill it out honestly.

(PLEASE TICK THE BOX)

Do you read magazines? YES() NO()

How often do you buy magazines?

Every day () Every week () Every month() Every year()

Would you be interested in buying a school magazine?

YES() NO()

How much would you pay for a school magazine?

€5() €7 () €10()

Which time would be most suitable to buy the magazine?

8:40-9:00 () 11:00-11:15 () 1:00-2:00 () 4:00-4:15 ()

Would you be interested in entering a short story competition?

YES () NO ()

How much would you pay to enter the short story competition?

50c () 75c () €1 ()

Would you be interested in entering a Christmas themed art competition?

YES () NO ()

How much would you pay to enter a Christmas themed art competition?

€1 () €2 () €3 ()

Where outside the school should we sell the magazine?

(please explain your answer)

Do you have any ideas for a fun Christmas recipe?

(please explain your answer)

Do you have any suggestions as to what else you would like to see in our magazine?

(please explain your answer)